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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (8/21): WHY DO PALESTINIANS INSIST
ON NEGOTIATIONS?!!!

Main Stories:

The three dailies lead with news of a donation by the European Union to the Palestinian Authority worth 77 million euros. According to the reports, 37 million euros will go to support of public service infrastructure and 40 million euros to help the Palestinian Authority cover expenses. The agreement was signed by Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and the Head of the EU Office in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, John Kjaer, in Ramallah. Following the signing, Fayyad praised the supporting role of the EU.

Al-Quds highlights news of commemorations planned for the 39th anniversary of the burning Al-Aqsa Mosque to take place on August 21. According to a statement issued by the Palestinian National Council, the anniversary occurs this year amidst continuing Israeli conspiracies against Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Al-Quds and Al-Ayyam report that the two ships "Free Gaza" and "Liberty" arrived in Larnaka, Cyprus on August 20. In a statement, the organization sponsoring the ships said passengers on the two ships will now transfer to one ship, which will continue to Gaza. An additional 20 passengers from Larnaka will join the ship to make the final voyage to Gaza. Preparations for their departure will include a prayer for the 5000 Palestinians who have died since September 2000 and 34 sailors who died on the USS Liberty in 1967. The prayer will take place on August 21.

All dailies report on Israeli actions in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Al-Ayyam cites a WAFA report that East Jerusalemites blocked an August 20 attempt by Jewish "extremists" to occupy land in Al-Thori neighborhood in East Jerusalem close to King David's tomb. Related coverage in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida cited reports that Israeli forces closed two local radio stations in Hebron on August 20 under

the claim that their broadcasts interrupt military frequencies.

All dailies cite a WAFA report that the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs announced that the prisoners' release has been delayed to sometime after Friday, August 22.

Al-Ayyam reports that Al-Qassam Brigades warned the Israeli government that Gilad Shalit will meet the same fate as the Israeli pilot Ron Arad who disappeared in Lebanon if the Israeli government continues delaying the prisoners' exchange deal.

Al Quds carries news that a representative from the U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem and another from Creative Associates visited the Ebeydiyah municipality and the Ebeydiyah Youth Club in order to discuss possible cooperation.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1. Independent Al-Quds runs an editorial by the Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Abdul Rahim Mallouh, entitled, "Why?!!!" (8/21): "[T]he important lesson Palestinian decision-makers, in particular, and the Palestinian people, in general, should take [from international negotiations] is that direct and indirect negotiations and agreements... have reversed the [Palestinian] people's cause years back. [These negotiations and agreements] have squandered the [Palestinian people's] sacrifices and achievements during their long struggle... the big question that is raised is why do the Palestinian people

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accept or even insist on continuing such negotiations after it is clear that they are absurd and even harmful?!!!!..."

2. Independent Al-Ayyam carries an editorial by regular columnist Abdullah Awwad entitled, "The Dialogue" (8/21): "[T]he coming dialogue in Cairo is a failure because... Hamas is not interested in dialogue or in agreement unless it is decided that Hamas can maintain military control in the Gaza Strip and be the sole leader of all the Palestinian people. The truce with Israel increased Hamas' arrogance expressed in its reaction to the beach bombings [in the Gaza Strip]. Now, [Hamas'] good relations with Jordan will increase [Hamas'] arrogance because [Hamas] will have now reached the same status as Fatah and the same attitude that its authority should be eternal. There is no need to give the Cairo dialogue any other interpretation than that ... it is a dialogue with no result... a dialogue which will pave the way to a new wave of bloody violence... Hamas is joining the dialogue only because it is incapable of giving up [authority]..."

WALLES